

Message Text

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P 162241Z APR 76 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 093157 TOSEC 100014

STADIS//////////

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT ADDIS ABABA 4554 ACTION SECSTATE 15 APR

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 4554

STADIS

EXDIS

NO DISTRIBUTION OUTSIDE AF BUREAU

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT

SUBJECT: AMB'S CONVERSATION WITH FONMIN APRIL 14

REF: ADDIS ABABA 4512

SO THAT BUREAU WILL HAVE FULL FLAVOR OF SUBJECT CONVERSATION,
FOLLOWING POINTS, WHEN COMBINED WITH REFTEL, CONSTITUTE FULL
MEMCOM.

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1. WHEN HE ASKED ME TO KEEP HIS REMARKS ON "PERSONAL AND

OFF-RECORD BASIS" (PARA 4), I INDICATED I COULD NOT DO SO BECAUSE OF MY RESPONSIBILITIES TO MY SUPERIORS IN USG.

2. IN DISCUSSING MY RECOMMENDATION (PARAS 6 AND 7) I POINTED OUT THERE WOULD INEVITABLY BE ADVERSE PERCEPTIONS IN U.S. ABOUT ANTI-U.S. ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS BY RADICALS, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER SECRETARY'S PARTY COMES OR NOT.

3. HE SAID SOMEWHAT EMOTIONALLY (PARA 4) THAT HE HAD BEEN PRACTICALLY ALONE IN ARGUING AGAINST RADICAL DECISIONS OF THE DIRG THAT HE DOESN'T AGREE WITH. HE SAID IT IS PROBLEMATIC HOW LONG HE WILL SURVIVE AS FONMIN. COMMENT: THIS SQUARES WITH OTHER INFO--THAT MODERATES ARE INEFFECTIVE AND THAT KIFLE IS ON THE SKIDS.

4. I SAID I APPRECIATED THE ROLE HE WAS PLAYING WITHIN THE GOVT, AND HE HAD MY SYMPATHY AND GOOD WISHES. HOWEVER, I HAD TO LOOK VERY HARD AT THE MAJOR ELEMENTS IN U.S.-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS, AND I WAS DISTURBED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF WHAT I COULD SEE. THERE WERE LIMITS TO USG FORBEARANCE AND TO EFFORTS TO PROTECT THE EPMG AGAINST THE CONSEQUENCES OF ITS OWN DECISIONS. THERE WOULD BE SERIOUS COSTS IN ALL OF EPMG'S EXTERNAL RELATIONS IF THOSE RELATIONS REMAINED IN THE HANDS OF RADICALS WHO PLACED GREATER IMPORTANCE ON INTERNAL REVOLUTIONARY ACTIONS THAN ON ETHIOPIA'S EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THIS TO BE TRUE, BUT SAID NOTHING COULD BE DONE ABOUT IT AT PRESENT. HE SAID EPMG HAS NOT EVOLVED VIABLE INSTITUTIONS FOR DECISIONMAKING, AND THAT HE WAS APPALLED AT THE UNINFORMED AND EMOTIONAL PEOPLE IN THE DIRG HE HAD TO CONTEND WITH. HE SAID SOME COMPLIMENTARY THINGS ABOUT MY EXPERIENCE WITH OTHER CHANGING AND REVOLUTIONARY SOCIETIES, WHICH HE THOUGHT HELPED ME TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS GOING ON IN ETHIOPIA.

5. I WAS QUITE DIRECT IN TELLING HIM (PARA 8) THAT WHILE I UNDERSTOOD THE LIMITATIONS OF HIS OWN ABILITY TO AFFECT DECISIONS, WE SIMPLY HAD TO FIND A WAY TO MAKE SURE THAT AMERICAN CITIZENS IN ETHIOPIA WERE NOT TARGETS OF RADICAL VIOLENCE. THE GOVT MEDIA HAD ATTACKED THE U.S. AND HAD NOT SAID A SINGLE WORD ABOUT ETHIOPIA'S FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH

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THE U.S. FOR OVER THREE MONTHS, AND AS I HAD TOLD HIM REPEATEDLY I FELT THERE WAS SERIOUS DANGER THAT RADICALS MIGHT BELIEVE VIOLENCE AGAINST AMERICANS TO BE IN LINE WITH GOVT POLICY. THERE WOULD BE STRONG REACTIONS IN THE USG, AND BY ME, IF ANY AMERICANS ARE HURT AS A RESULT OF THE EPMG'S INATTENTION TO THIS VERY REAL PROBLEM. HE DID NOT RESPOND TO THIS, WHICH I CONSIDER SOMEWHAT OMINOUS.

6. HE WANTED TO DISCUSS PROS AND CONS OF THE SECRETARY'S VISIT AGAIN THE NEXT DAY (APRIL 15) BEFORE I DECIDED ON MY RECOMMENDATION. I SAID TIME WAS VERY SHORT AND I HAD ALREADY DECIDED ALONG LINES I HAD OUTLINED, BUT IF I HAD FURTHER THOUGHTS I WOULD GET BACK TO HIM. HE SAID HE HAD TO GO TO DAKAR, LEAVING EITHER FRIDAY OR SATURDAY, MAY 16 OR 17, AND WOULD MAKE TIME TO SEE ME BEFORE LEAVING IF I WISHED.

7. HE CLOSED BY SAYING HE HAD WANTED TO TALK TO ME BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE F-5E'S THE FOLLOWING MORNING, SO AS TO AVOID ANY SUSPICION ON MY PART THAT HE HAD WAITED TO HAVE THE F-5E'S IN HAND BEFORE PRESENTING THIS PROBLEM CONCERNING THE SECRETARY'S VISIT.

COMMENT: FURTHER REFLECTION HAS NOT RPT NOT CAUSED ME TO ALTER JUDGMENTS MADE IN REFTTEL. ONE ELEMENT IS WORTH ADDING: THAT KIFLE'S FAILURE TO CAST DOUBT IN ANY WAY ON TWO MAJOR FACTORS-- THAT GOVT WOULD ASSURE SECURITY OF PARTY, AND THAT SUBSTANCE OF CONVERSATIONS WOULD NOT REFLECT RADICAL ATTITUDES--SUPPORT ASSESSMENT THAT THIS IS NOT A DISGUISED ATTEMPT BY EPMG (READ DIRG VICE-CHAIRMEN) TO FEND OFF VISIT. IF THAT HAD BEEN WHAT KIFLE WAS CHARGED WITH ACHIEVING, HE WOULD HAVE FOUND WAYS TO INDICATE SOME UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THOSE TWO VITAL FACTORS, PERHAPS BY SAYING EPMG "WOULD DO ITS BEST" TO HANDLE THEM. THUS I AM REINFORCED IN MY FEELING THAT KIFLE'S INTENT IS JUST WHAT HE SAID IT WAS: TO LIMIT DAMAGE TO AMERICAN PERCEPTIONS OF ETHIOPIA BY AVOIDING GLARE OF ADVERSE PUBLICITY THAT WOULD BE GENERATED BY PRESS PARTY. FYI SEPTTEL REPORTS FURTHER EVIDENCE THAT UNLEASHING OF RADICALS IS WELL ON THE WAY AND A TIMETABLE HAS BEEN SET, AS KIFLE SAID.
HUMMEL UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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